

APPROVING KEYSTONE PIPELINE WILL CREATE JOBS AND BOOST AMERICAN ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, President Obama has been going around the country saying that he is taking action through Executive order because “we can’t wait” on the Congress. However, he has just said that he is going to put the largest job-creating project in America on ice.

When it comes to creating jobs and providing additional resources for energy, the President can wait. In fact, he’s putting the Keystone pipeline off until after the 2012 election. That is nonsense and hypocritical.

This pipeline will not only create tens of thousands of jobs, it will also help to dramatically reduce our dependence on oil from despotic Middle Eastern petrostates. By blocking and delaying this important project, the Obama administration is standing squarely in the way of economic growth and energy independence.

It’s time to get serious about approving this pipeline. It has broad support, and its builders have demonstrated a strong willingness to do what it takes to reduce potential environmental impact, even going so far as to propose changing its route.

Mr. Speaker, this project makes sense for our economy and for our national security and energy independence. It’s long past time the Obama administration stopped blocking its progress, because the American people can’t wait on this issue.

But the President again seems oblivious to the fact that we have a real unemployment rate of approximately 26 million people. I want to read some information put out by the Republican Conference this morning.

“According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of Americans who are either unemployed, underemployed, or not searching because they’ve been discouraged by the job market has reached 26 million people. In October, nearly 14 million workers were unemployed, with an additional 8.9 million working part time because they could not find full-time work. There were also 2.5 million workers who were available for work but had stopped actively searching because of the economic conditions. All told, over 16 percent of the U.S. workforce is now unemployed or underemployed.” And yet the President won’t make a decision on the Keystone pipeline that would create tens of thousands of jobs.

Republicans, though, have taken action. We have over 20 bills sitting in the Senate, introduced by Republicans but passed by a bipartisan House majority, and these will all create jobs in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the American people to go to jobs.gop.gov and click

on “track legislation” for them to see the evidence of what Republicans are promoting in the House of Representatives that is being stopped in the Senate. Yes, there is a do-nothing part of the Congress, Mr. Obama, but that is in the Senate, which is controlled by the Democrats.

So again, I want to urge Americans to go to jobs.gop.gov and click on “track legislation.” Republicans have the will to help create jobs in this country through empowering small businesses and reducing government barriers to job creation, fixing the Tax Code, boosting competitiveness, encouraging entrepreneurship, maximizing American energy production, and paying down America’s unsustainable debt burden and starting to live within our means.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

HONORING OUR NATION'S VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this past Friday was Veterans Day, the day we set aside to honor and remember the service of our Nation’s veterans. I know that most of my colleagues attended veterans events throughout their districts. I was proud to be at the American Freedom Festival, honoring our veterans, at a jobs fair and a mega-concert at George Mason University.

Although Veterans Day originally honored those who fought in World War I, in 1954 it was expanded to include the remembrance of all veterans. And, indeed, every veteran deserves such honor. They all chose to risk their lives to protect us. They bravely answered the call of their Nation. But, sadly, too many died in defense of our freedom. Of course, such noble service would not be possible without the unwavering support of their families.

America is safer because of our veterans, from those who served overseas to those stationed here at home. We properly award medals for individual heroic actions, but it is their daily dedication, courage, and valor that makes each and every one of them an American hero.

There are more than 21 million veterans in the United States—73,000 in my district, the 11th District of Virginia, alone. We celebrate their commitment and their sacrifice, from the Revolutionary War to the Iraq war.

But our remembrance must not end simply by honoring their past service. Upon leaving the military, many veterans face significant challenges here at home. Although more must be done, the issue of providing care to our wounded veterans has been well documented. I was pleased to join many of my colleagues to support the largest

single increase of funding for the Veterans Administration in history.

However, there is a growing crisis among our veterans. And I want to call attention to the troubling unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans, which, at 12.4 percent, is one-third higher than the national average. And as the troops currently stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan begin coming home, it will only get worse.

These are America’s heroes, men and women who risk their lives to protect our families. Congress repeatedly comes together in a bipartisan fashion to support our troops overseas. Ensuring that our troops have the equipment and personnel they need to accomplish their mission has been a priority, but it can’t be the only priority. It is long past time that we show the same commitment to our veterans when they come home.

More than one in nine veterans who left the service in the past decade is currently unemployed. Jobs have to be our top priority. We’ve got to move beyond lip service. If we really want to help our veterans, hire them.

The President’s American Jobs Act recognizes the overarching need to create jobs. Our economy cannot fully recover while so many Americans are unable to find work. The American Jobs Act provides incentives for companies, large and small, to hire additional workers, and it cuts taxes on every working American in order to further spur economic demand.

Most importantly, the American Jobs Act provides additional incentives to companies when they hire veterans. The Returning Heroes Tax Credit cuts taxes for businesses that hire unemployed veterans. The Wounded Warriors Tax Credit offers even greater tax cuts to businesses who hire unemployed veterans with service-connected disabilities. These dedicated men and women aren’t looking for a handout; they’re looking for an opportunity. And the Senate has already acted on a number of these proposals by the President.

I call on my colleagues to remember that recognizing and honoring the sacrifices of our veterans doesn’t stop when they leave the service. They need jobs, and they need them now.

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THE NATIONAL RIGHT-TO-CARRY RECIPROCITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. NUNNELEE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Mr. Speaker, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. The Second Amendment is one of the cornerstones of our liberty. That’s why this morning I rise in support of H.R. 822, the National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act.

In Mississippi, approximately 45,000 people have concealed carry permits.

Now, those individuals in Mississippi that have a driver's license issued by our State can drive into Alabama or Tennessee or, for that matter, they can drive into Montana or Maine and their driver's license is recognized as being valid.

H.R. 822 applies that same principle to people with their concealed carry permits. This legislation does not require or authorize action by any Federal agency. New rules or regulations won't be needed to implement H.R. 822. It doesn't override any State or local law. A concealed carry permit holder would still be required to comply with the laws of the State he or she is in.

I support the National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act because it expands freedom for law-abiding gun owners, while respecting each State's right to set its own laws.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Before I talk about my topic of protecting our children, I want to acknowledge, first of all, the coming Thanksgiving and the many people who are impoverished in this Nation that we need to pay attention to and, particularly, our children, which is the largest percentage of those impoverished are children in the United States.

For that reason, I think it is important that as we begin this discussion on the supercommittee and its responsibility, that we look at the responsibility to the American people. And if we cannot fairly bring in revenue and balance the cuts on the most vulnerable, we should go to regular order.

Let me also welcome our troops that will be coming home. And I will be initiating in Houston an idea that every single school will have a welcome home troops all over the community, and not one tree will be left undressed, if you will, to make sure that none of our soldiers walk down any block in a lonely way and not know that they are welcomed and loved.

Thirdly, I'd like to say that as they are coming home, are we preparing to use their many talents that they have learned, particularly those who understand homeland security, putting them to work for the Homeland Security Department.

I also want to create jobs. And one of my constituents is ExxonMobil, who has struck a contract with the Kurds dealing with oil and gas in Iraq. Lo and behold, the very country that we've shed blood for, no matter whether you were green energy or for or against fossil fuel, it is about jobs and about work here in the United States.

The audacity of the Iraqi Government to suggest they want to intrude on that contract and to have a say on that contract, well, when lives were lost, American lives were lost, they didn't have too much of a say. Ameri-

cans were willing to stand up and be counted. And I'd hope the Iraqis would allow a fair contract to go forward.

It seems that every time America's involved in helping the Iraqi people through the Iraqi Government there's always a negative response. Some of us are a little tired of that.

Mr. Speaker, I rise particularly today to talk about our children. As the co-chair and founder of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I noted already the disaster that children are experiencing. In my own home State, food stamps hit a record in Texas. We know that Governor Perry is running for President, but in his home State we're facing a crisis with the number of people on food stamps.

We're also facing a crisis because the policy agency for education, the Texas Education Agency, is deciding to go throughout the State of Texas and to save money on education by closing school districts, small school districts in particular. They're too fearful of closing the big ones. And I represent many of them, and I love them all and bring money to them and encourage them to educate their children. But there's something about school districts that are too big to fail.

But the North Forest Independent School District, where hundreds of community leaders and children and parents and teachers came out on Sunday to stand up against a so-called revocation notice that would close down this school district that has all the need to survive, 7,500 students, a high school that they are putting together and repairing and getting children to learn, 1,200 students in this high school; middle schools, elementary schools, a preschool that is renowned and respected by all.

But the TEA wants to cut the budget and save its own neck by cutting small school districts. And so my plea to my Governor, Governor Perry, join with me and the many citizens that you represent, and stand against the TEA to close a majority minority school district, the last remaining majority minority school district with great history in the North Forest Independent School District community, taxing themselves to ensure that their children have more resources, and are joined with the Houston Community College System so that their children are getting college preparatory credits.

They want to live. They want to survive. Don't belt tighten and save your necks and your jobs on the backs of our children. Don't disregard and discriminate against small school districts which are all over America on behalf of large school districts.

And Governor Perry, I think we can work together. As we worked together against the Confederate flag license plate, we can work together on this matter.

Let me close by focusing on an issue that has taken this country by storm. And as I read the indictment I don't want to point out one name versus an-

other, the alleged perpetrator in this Penn State fiasco. But I will say that this is a disgrace. I will be introducing legislation to have zero tolerance for sexual abuse of children and to stop any Federal funds going to anyone, any entity, any State that has a situation where children are sexually abused.

Mr. Speaker, it is a disgrace, and the Federal Government must stand up against it. I, for one, am going to do so. Enough is enough. We have to protect our children.

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GOVERNMENT MONEY ISN'T FREE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HECK. Mr. Speaker, Washington seems to have forgotten that government money isn't free, and it is the American taxpayers who support its spending habit. Simply put, the Federal Government doesn't respect your hard work, your discipline, your sacrifice or your unwavering commitment to self-reliance. We must change that.

The time to force accountability, leadership and respect is long past due, and the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution may be the only solution. A balanced budget amendment would force Washington politicians to exercise necessary fiscal restraint and better judgment when debating where and how to spend American taxpayer dollars.

The days of borrowing money and passing the debt on to our families and small businesses would be over, and Washington would be forced to live within its means, just like you and I.

The government should be doing a few things very well, instead of a lot of things poorly. It should help give people peace of mind. But its insatiable appetite for spending does exactly the opposite. Our small businesses face uncertainty created by a government that funds its misadventures with borrowed money and higher taxes.

Washington's spending habit will rot our economic foundation to the core and destroy the American Dream as we know it. The government can't spend its way out of a recession, but it can help create an environment of confidence and predictability that America's job creators, work force and families are seeking.

President Barack Obama has said that the Nation needs a balanced approach when addressing Washington's unsustainable spending. But one only has to ask, what's more balanced than a balanced budget amendment? Forty-nine of 50 States have balanced budget requirements, and a CNN poll shows that 74 percent of the American people support a balanced budget amendment.

This is not a partisan fight. This is a commonsense solution to an undeniable problem that is plaguing our economy.